

CLAIMS

1. A steam automatic dispensing device for preparing hot and/or frothed drinks, comprising:

- a first duct (13) for introducing steam inside said drink;
5 - a second duct (15) for introducing air inside said drink;
- an electronic control unit (51) for controlling the introduction of steam and/or air through said first and second duct, said control unit being programmable to carry out a predetermined control cycle depending on the desired 10 drink to be obtained.

2. A device according to claim 1, wherein said first and second duct are provided with electromechanical means for controlling the introduction of steam and/or air through said ducts, said means being operated by said electronic 15 control unit.

3. A device according to claim 2, wherein said electromechanical means comprise a corresponding electrovalve for each of said first and second duct for controlling the introduction of steam and/or air through 20 said ducts, said electrovalves being operated by said electronic control unit.

4. A device according to claim 3, wherein a first of said two electrovalves (14, 16) is a three-way electrovalve, a first way being connected to said second duct (15), a second 25 way being connected to an air introducing pipe (33) and a

third way being connected to a steam dispensing pipe (31; 37).

5. A device according to claim 4, wherein a second of said two electrovalves (14, 16) is a three-way electrovalve, a 5 first way being connected to said first duct (13), a second way being connected to a steam dispensing pipe (29) and a third way being connected to said third way of said first three-way electrovalve (16) through an intermediate pipe (31).

10 6. A device according to claim 4, wherein a second of said two electrovalves (14, 16) is a three-way electrovalve, a first way being connected to said first duct (13), a second way being connected to a steam dispensing pipe (29) and a third way being connected to a pipe (39) open to the 15 outside.

7. A device according to claim 1, wherein said first duct (13) has the end (13a), fit for being immersed in said drink, closed and it is provided with a radial hole (17) near said end.

20 8. A device according to claim 7, wherein the end (19), fit for being immersed in said drink, of said second duct (15) is provided with an axial opening (21) placed so to be in front of said radial hole (17) of said first duct (13).

9. A device according to claim 3, wherein said electronic 25 control unit (51) comprises a microprocessor (55), provided

with a storage (57) within which the instructions relevant to an opening and closing cycle of said electrovalves (14, 16) are stored, said microprocessor controlling opening and closing of said electrovalves on the basis of said 5 instructions.

10. A device according to claim 9, wherein said storage (57) contains the instructions relevant to the carrying out of a plurality of opening and closing cycles of said electrovalves and wherein said electronic control unit 10 comprises a selector (53) to select the wanted cycle.

11. A device according to claim 10, wherein it is further provided a temperature electronic probe (23) fit for being immersed in said drink, whose temperature-indicative signal is processed by said microprocessor (55) for controlling 15 opening and closing of said electrovalves (14, 16).

12. A device according to claim 10, wherein said opening and closing cycle provides a first step (I) wherein steam is introduced simultaneously through both said first and second duct (13, 15) and the introduction of air is prevented, a 20 second step (II) wherein steam is introduced through said first duct and air is introduced through said second duct and a third step (III) wherein steam is introduced simultaneously through both said first and second duct (13, 15) and the introduction of air is prevented.

25 13. A device according to claim 12, wherein said first (I),

second (II) and third step (III) have a preset duration.

14. A device according to claim 11 and 12, wherein the duration of said first (I), second (II) and third (III) step depends on the temperature signal coming from said 5 temperature probe (23).

15. A device according to anyone of the preceding claims, further comprising a container (11) suitable for containing said drink, said first and second duct (13, 15) being fastened to said container.